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deep. It is edged on three sides with a cord matching the blue and garnet. At both upper corners and on the upper centre there are loops by which it can be fastened to round porcelain knobs screwed to the window frame. The silk brocade and velvet for the curtain may be ordered from any dealer in fine upholstery goods; if less costly material is desired, woollen damask, or even heavily-lined cretonne may be substituted. The other materials mentioned above may be had of Selig, or Bentley Brothers, in New York, or of R. H. Stearns & Co., in Boston. Of course the colors may be changed at pleasure, to harmonize with the furniture of the room.

#### GOOD TASTE IN HOUSE DECORATION.

"WE all love a warm room, a cheery fire, a comfortable arm-chair, cleanliness and brightness. These are the grosser parts of household comfort which all can enjoy. But many of us," says an entertaining writer in *Good Words*, "attempt also to surround ourselves with things not purely utilitarian. We ornament our walls with paper and paint, our doors with mouldings, our ceilings and cornices with plaster-work, our floors with carpets, our fireplaces with marbles, our chairs with chintzes. And the consequence of all this is, that we often spend a good deal of money in making ourselves less comfortable than we should have been if we had spent very little. The motive of this outlay is not unfrequently a desire to obtain cheap magnificence, to imitate with little what richer neighbors have bought with their plenty. And we certainly succeed in imitating their gaudiness. Only we forget one of the essential principles of all good art, that if a thing is conspicuous it should be able to bear close examination. How much better it would be if, instead of trying to produce cheap imitations of things which properly belong only to grand reception-rooms and stately galleries, we could contrive a style of decoration which should be in keeping with the houses in which we live and with our manner of life.

The love of show for its own sake is vulgar. The desire to create a sensation becomes at times such a passion that it is blinding to all discrimination between beauty and ugliness. To show a beautiful thing because it is beautiful is not vulgar; but to show any thing, whether beautiful or ugly, for the sake of show—that is vulgar. There are few men or women who would not consider that cheap gaudiness in dress, with all its accompaniments of false jewelry, and what is called 'loudness,' was to the last degree vulgar. But the strange thing is, that the very men and women, who are really in many ways cultured and refined, do not see that they commit the same faults in the decoration of their drawing-rooms that they blame with severity in the dressing of their servants.

It would be impossible, within the present limits, to discuss, on the one hand, all the vulgarities of ordinary furnishing, or to describe, on the other hand, all the desirable refinements in it; but a few instances we may deal with. We will suppose that we are in an ordinary drawing-room in a moderately-sized house. The first object that strikes us as we enter, perhaps, is a gigantic looking-glass, about four feet wide and six feet high, placed over the mantelpiece. It is surrounded with a rather elaborate and coarse gilt moulding. Such a mirror is often the first thing thought of to decorate the walls and to prevent the room from looking bare. If we ask why a large mirror over the chimney-piece (or any where else) is thought desirable, we probably hear that 'it gives size to the room,' or that 'it brightens it up.' When we are told that it gives size to the room, we are presumably to understand that it makes us believe there is a second room over the chimney-piece just like the first. Of course we are never thus taken in by ordinarily arranged mirrors; and if we were, it would be very unpleasant. So that the first reason given in defence of them falls to the ground. With respect to the second excuse for their existence, we must observe that they undoubtedly do to a certain extent reflect, and therefore do increase the amount of light in the room; but they diminish the amount of light that there appears to be by reflecting the darker parts of the room only to the spectator owing to their positions. And it is the amount of light that there *appears to be*, not the amount of light that there *is*, in a room that is impor-

tant. So much for the supposed advantages and beauties of mirrors. Now let us consider the objections to them. We have seen that gloominess is one. Another is the appearance of smallness in rooms which they invariably produce. It is almost always possible to increase the apparent size of a small room in a legitimate way by avoiding large objects. A large statue or a large picture makes a small room look smaller still, not so much by filling it up as by destroying its scale. The eye naturally compares one thing with another, and measures one thing by another. As a rule a big pattern on a wall paper, a large door, a large sheet of plate-glass in a window, all tend to make a room look smaller. Thus the vulgarity of cheap magnificence defeats its own object, and the effort to avoid supposed meanness succeeds only in making evident the very thing it is most anxious to hide. Another serious objection that may be made to large mirrors as usually placed is the unpleasant way in which we catch sight of ourselves reflected in them. This, of course, is a pure matter of taste; but I believe that most people share this dislike of having their own personality suddenly brought under their notice. The effect of these mirrors in promoting self-consciousness in children is also much to be deprecated.

The use of gilding requires very great care. Gold leaf in the hands of an artist may be employed with wonderful effect. It may be made to give lightness or heaviness, brightness or shadow. It may be made to harmonize a system of coloring that would be crude without it, and it may produce a marvellous richness; but exactly in proportion as it may be used to adorn, in that proportion it may be used to destroy beauty, and to draw attention to ugliness. And it must be admitted that the way in which gilding is generally used displays an extraordinary ignorance of its artistic properties. In the first place it makes the objects it covers more conspicuous. There are some things (some carvings, for instance) which are very good, both in design and workmanship, but which require some of their parts to be emphasized and made to stand out against other parts. In these cases we may gild either of the parts and so produce the desired contrast. As a rule, it will be found best to gild those intended to catch the light. It will be found in almost all cases that the use of gold should in decoration be reserved for the accentuation of form. This is of course only a general rule, and is liable to many exceptions under peculiar circumstances. But how is gold generally used? Let us look round the room and see. It is to be seen on the frames of the mirrors above mentioned. The cornices above the valances of the curtains look as if they had been dipped into it, the pattern of the wall paper is drawn out with it, and the mouldings of the doors are covered with it. These carvings and mouldings, let us suppose, are of good design and carefully wrought. Consider those of the panels of the doors. The beauty of good plain moulding consists in the contrast of light and shade that exists between its members, and of the relative proportions of those members. On mouldings of this kind gilding might be employed with great effect, not by covering over the whole, but by so carefully choosing those members that the contrasts of light and shade between them shall be increased, and the proportions of them maintained or improved. The same rules will apply to all mouldings and carvings whatsoever that have to be gilt. As a matter of fact, however, in most houses the mouldings are very far from being either well designed or carefully executed. They are, on the contrary, poor in form and lumpy and coarse in workmanship. In such cases gilding usually merely serves to attract attention to what should be carefully left as subdued as possible.

But, indeed, as we look round, we see that discord prevails. What can be more harsh than the white marble chimney-piece surrounding the cold steel grate? If we chose to give a large sum of money for a marble chimney-piece we could procure one which, with the help of delicate sculpture, might have been made beautiful; but this is no reason why we should spend on bare polished marble much more than would be necessary to carry out a beautiful design in wood. But not content with putting up white marble, we double the effect of its coldness by contrasting it with black iron or steel. There is really no excuse for this. Steel requires much cleaning to keep off rust. A certain amount of iron, of course, there must be, as it is required to stand the heat; but the heavy mouldings and flat surfaces, which seem made on purpose to

give work, are quite unnecessary. Grates can be easily procured calculated to give a large amount of heat for the fuel consumed, with a very small edge of iron round a square opening in front, delicately moulded. If this be surrounded above and on each side with tiles about six or eight inches square, of good color and design, and the whole be inclosed with a good bold moulding of painted deal or oak, the result is most effective, and the cost is slight. One or more shelves may be erected above on brackets or otherwise. All the beauty will depend on the proper choice of tiles, grate, and mouldings. In this arrangement, if the hearth be covered with tiles as well as the sides, the only thing that requires any labor to clean is the grate itself, and this should be made as little conspicuous as possible. Any amount of play of design may be given to the wooden surroundings. They may be ornamented with pilasters or brackets or shelves or panels, carried up to the ceiling or left three or four feet high; and all this may be done more effectively, as well as more cheaply, in wood than in marble."

#### OLD FURNITURE IN WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, January 10, 1880.

THE amount of second-hand furniture bought and sold in Washington is extraordinary. It is greatly owing to the floating population that the auctions have come to be a permanent feature of the streets of the National capital. The mania for the antique draws into the second-hand stores the boundless household resources of all this old Maryland and Virginia country. New England has been swept and dusted for the last ten years, until I should fancy there are no *new* antiques left, but in Washington the demand is more recent and the supply larger. Old homesteads have been broken up by the fortune of war and subsequent misfortune, and the flotsam and jetsam floats up to the wreckers. The second-hand stores are full of sideboards and mirrors and stately chairs that have seen better days. One day some months ago I stopped to look in Thompson's window on the avenue at a brass fender, a perfect Grand Patriarch of a fender. And then I caught sight of a carved bed-post, in the old English carving of a hundred years ago, solid mahogany, good as gold and warm as wine. And then, having got the entrée to this old curiosity shop, I was taken through all the débris, away back to the room where the "renovating" is done, and dull and dingy furniture "suffers a sea-change" into something as much better than new as is old wine than new. It has the warm rich tone that is without money and without price, and which only age can bring. Mr. Thompson has fitted up a number of rooms in old mahogany for Washington people of wealth and taste.

At the great sale at the Gales mansion a while ago, bric-à-brac of all sorts was set adrift. Most of it was bought on the spot by private individuals, though some fell into the hands of the dealers. I saw in a store afterward a quaint old mirror which came from there. It was about thirty by twenty inches, and made with leaves hinged on and folding over in Japanese fashion, and mounted with strong brass rings for hanging—a mirror made to travel round the world without breaking—and it was only \$2.50! Down on the eastern shore, a friend who lives there tells me, there go for a song at country sales andirons that for beauty of workmanship would command a high price in decorative art rooms. I remember an artist who once told me of andirons he had seen in the interior provinces of France that were poems in iron. My friend declares that at a breaking-up sale down near Norfolk the other day she bought a pair of sonnets in brass.

CALISTA HALSEY.

The art of covering wood with lacquer has remained a prerogative of the Chinese and Japanese nations. The brilliant red Chinese lacquer called "Sou-chow," which is made from sulphuret of mercury, was known to the ancient Romans, and Pliny, with his usual imagination, describes it as being composed of a mixture of the blood of the dragon and that of the elephant. Japanese books of a couple of centuries before Christ speak of lacquered furniture. Though in our furnace-heated houses it is not very durable, in Japan it is considered indestructible, and heirlooms six or seven hundred years old are shown. They are always

wrapped up in silk, however, and kept in wooden boxes, and are only exhibited on grand occasions.

#### SPANISH AND FRENCH POINT LACE.

LACE continues to be so fashionable, not only for ladies' costumes, but for the decoration of mantels and other objects of furniture, that our lady readers will thank us for resuming our remarks on the subject, which had to be broken off some months ago by press of other matter. The illustrations given on this page of Spanish and French point, we are sure will be regarded with interest in connection with the specimens of rare Italian laces illustrated in the second number of the first volume of THE ART AMATEUR.

The real Spanish point work—raised and flat—closely resembles Venetian point. The impulse to this sumptuous lacework seems to have been given first through the Moorish embroideries, for which the Spanish Arabs occupying the kingdoms of Valencia, Murcia, and Andalusia during the Middle Ages, were famous, and then through the school of embroidery established by Philip II. in the convent of the Escorial toward the end of the sixteenth century, and flourishing after the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1610, where exquisite needlework was wrought under the direction of Fray Lorenzo di Monserrate and Diego Rutimer, after the designs of Tibaldi and other great painters. The influence of this school explains the superiority of design in point laces of Spanish origin. The scrollwork of ornamented fleur de lys, acanthus leaves, and connecting stalks shows far more graceful and easier lines than may be observed in Venetian point. This work was restricted to a few nunneries, and practised there almost exclusively for the adornment of the innumerable churches, saints, and priests; but very little used for profane dress, as contemporary portraits show. Admirable specimens of this gorgeous point are preserved in the cathedral of Toledo, where a complete set of vestments and altar fronts, richly embroidered and trimmed with lace, exists for every one of the principal feasts of the year.

A beautiful specimen of Spanish raised point, exhibited at the South Kensington Museum, consists of chasuble, stole, and maniple, with a corporal or small square to place the sacramental cup upon. Nothing can surpass this priceless lace in beauty of design, marvellous workmanship, and matchless preservation; and the cost, £200, for which the treasure was purchased, must be considered very moderate.

Scarcely any other old point has been so frequently imitated as Spanish raised point. The flowers and stalks were either formed with tape or braid, or cut out from solid linen, the outlines buttonholed, and the raised parts sewn on. These imitations are a mockery of the old work, and are valueless.

Sometimes pieces occur more or less skilfully made up of detached flowers and stalks; they are most valuable to the collector, as they frequently contain fragments of point work made at different periods, and in localities widely apart.

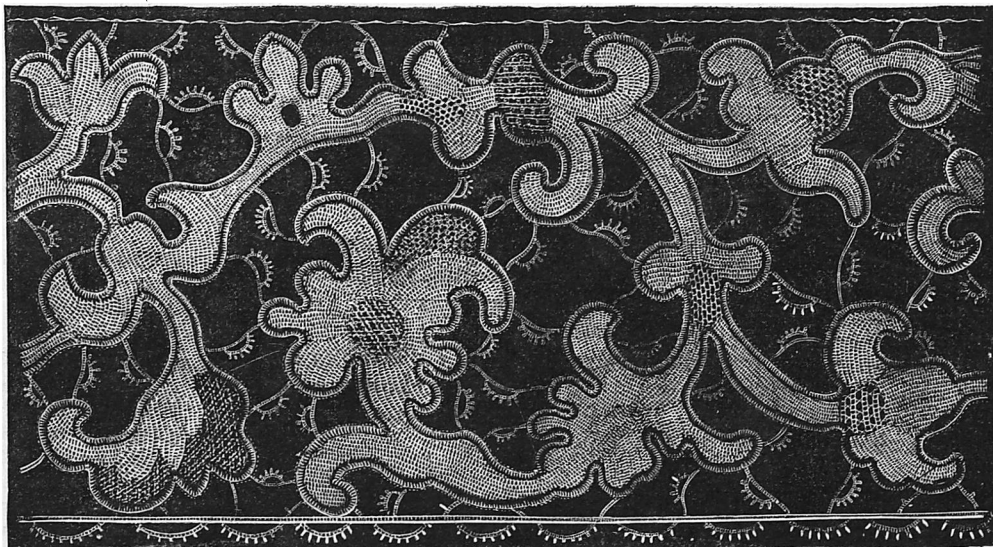
Flat Spanish point has the appearance of unfinished raised point, with the relief work omitted. Specimens are scarce.

The manufacture of point lace in France was established by Colbert under singular circumstances. The French nobles would lavish their substance in the purchase of the costly laces of Venice, Genoa, and Flanders, and persisted in squandering thousands of

livres. The most stringent ordinance prohibiting all foreign points, and even French laces exceeding an inch in width, was simply laughed at; whereupon Colbert bethought himself of the shrewd expedient of draining the purses of his countrymen into his own exchequer; he set to work to have the coveted Venetian and Spanish points produced in France, and he succeeded well in his effort. Under Colbert's auspices Mme. Gilbert, a native of Alençon, procured thirty Italian laceworkers from Venice, and started the manufacture of point lace work at Colbert's Château de Lonray, near Alençon. The early points de France made at Lonray were a close imitation of raised Venetian and Spanish points as far

ing replaced by parchment and small gilt spangles let into the edge at intervals, a tuft of colored ribbons on either side. A pill box cut down a little, and a brim of black paper added, makes a sailor hat, or, with a silk bag inside, serves to contain sweetmeats.

The "wish-bones" of fowls may be dressed as sailors, or nurses. The head is made of wool and sealing wax covered with white calico, which should be slightly painted for the face. The two bones make the legs, the upper portion being stuffed for the bodies. And the shell of a lobster can be turned to very good account, especially if converted into the semblance of Oxford and Cambridge Dons. Two of the lobster's legs make the man's legs, and must be fastened to a square piece of wood for a stand; the outer shell of the body must be placed upright and stuffed, the stuffing covered in the front with black velvet made to look as much like a waistcoat as can be, with a row of steel beads down the front for buttons. Two more legs make arms, and a piece of newspaper placed in them keeps up the delusion. The pincer ends of the claws, with tiny spectacles across them, and a college cap poised on the top, form the head-piece. Sometimes, however, a piece of colored candle is moulded into a capital face, with beads for eyes, and fuzzy bits for whiskers, hair, and mustaches. An academic robe depends from where the shoulders should be.



SPANISH FLAT POINT (RENAISSANCE STYLE).

as workmanship was concerned; but the design appears considerably improved, with the Spanish style for basis. The pattern as a whole shows less stiff and more easily flowing lines. Fleur de lys and rigid stalks are more or less discarded for a graceful scrollwork of acanthus leaves, terminating and interspersed with star and rose-shaped flowers. The relief ornamentation of the raised work was even richer and more elaborate than in Spanish points.

#### DOLL FURNITURE.

SOME ingenious methods of making dolls and doll

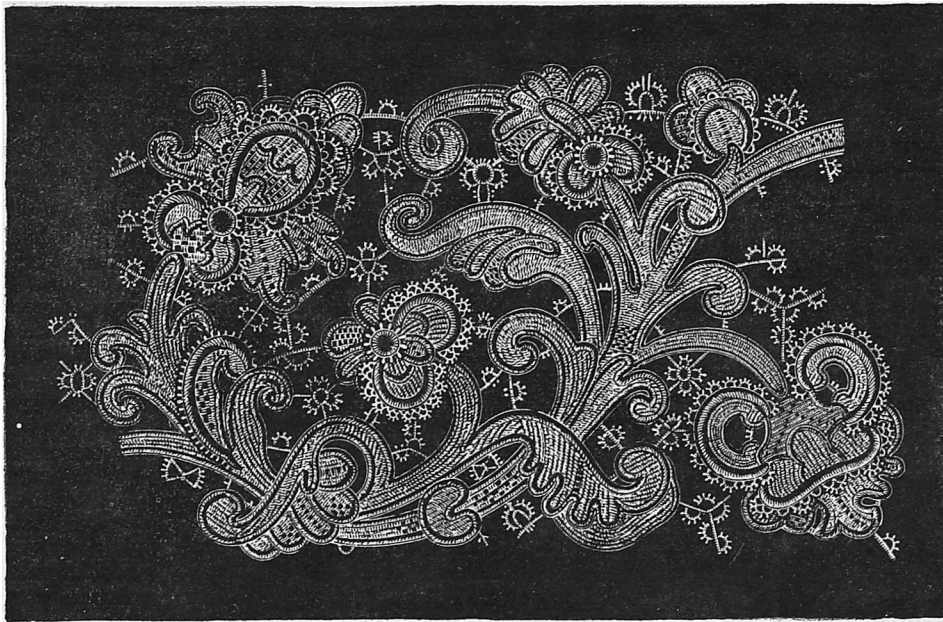
Round strawberry baskets can be covered either with chintz or with muslin over pink or blue calico, and fitted up as a complete doll wardrobe, small china dolls dressed as babies occupying the centre, and white frocks and under linen, hood, cloak, sponge (in sponge bag), and all the details of baby toilette, filling the several pockets. One of Colman's mustard boxes, set on end, with two shelves at equal distances, makes a good doll's house, the nursery at the top, the drawing-room below, and the kitchen under that. Paper the walls, carpet the floors, and then proceed to furnish.

Seidlitz powder boxes are easily converted into beds; the depth of the box is cut down to half, the lid is sewed edgewise to the top, and widened a little for the overhanging portion, and then the whole is covered with chintz, and furnished with bed, pillows, sheets, and blankets.

There is an evident revival of the taste for antique jewelry, and that for Japanese designs in gold is dying out. Coins of gold and of silver are set now as pins, necklaces, and bracelets. One of the favorite gold coins for scarf-pins is one of Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. It has a fine profile on one side and a chariot and horses on the other, in commemoration of the victory the king carried off at the Olympic games. These coins ought not

to cost more than from twelve to eighteen dollars, according to the state of preservation they are in. The silver coins of the Roman emperors are also much used by jewellers.

A charming manner of decorating a panel on a wall or the pier between two windows is to cover the space to be ornamented with tulle, the meshes of which are as large as possible. This at a short distance does not hide the painting or the paper on the wall, and it makes an excellent groundwork on which autumn leaves and ferns can be pinned to form very ornamental designs.



POINT DE FRANCE (LOUIS XIV. PERIOD).

furniture out of the simplest materials are thus described by an English writer: Very pretty toy ottomans are made of common spools, the seats of cardboard, and stuffed, and single seats by simply putting each spool in a chintz bag, with a little wadding at the top, and a piece of ribbon tied in the centre. A cigar box, set on end, varnished, and fitted in with shelves, is transformed into a wardrobe, and without shelves, merely with largish dress hooks, fastened round with small tacks, it makes a hanging wardrobe. A sardine box, cut in half, and bent into shape, makes a doll's fender. Toy tambourines to attach to dolls dressed as gypsies, are made out of the lids of pill boxes, the cardboard be-